

Specific Military Actions

Incident: FORMOSA CRISIS 1958

Date: 1958

Unit	Actions	Initiated	Terminated	Revealing Source
US 7th FLEET + FLEET MARINE FORCE CVAs Lexington,	US STEPS UP PATROLS NEAR TAIWAN, INCREASES # OF PLANES & SHIPS.	AUG 4	AUG 5	7th FLEET HIST
	US COAST GUARD 3 LST'S, CONDUCTS LARGE SCALE AIR EXERCISES, FLAG OFFICERS VISIT OFFSHORE ISLANDS, PLACE 3 CARRIERS IN TAIWAN AREA, TRANSPORTS NEW ARMY EQUIPMENT FOR 7 DIVISIONS TO OFFSHORE ISLANDS.	AUG 22		FF/7/FEF SER # 002-1026
	US GIVES NAT'LIST SIDEWINDER MISSILES	AUG 23		
	MARINE AIR GROUP MOVED TO TAIWAN UNDER GUISE OF TRAINING EXERCISE - REMAINED ON ISLAND WITH JCJ APPROVAL	AUG 24		
	CNO AUTHORIZES USE OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS & ORDERS "PREPARATION" TO USE ATOMIC WEAPONS			
	US PREPARES NIKE MISSILE BATTALION TO MOVE TO TAIWAN FOR BETTER AIR DEFENSE.			
	US CARRIER HANCOCK & 4 DD'S ARRIVE	AUG 27		
	3 US CARRIERS WITH DD'S OPERATING NORTHWEST OF TAIWAN	AUG 30		
	US CRUISER COLUMBUS ARRIVES - ATTACK CARRIERS CONTINUE DAY & NIGHT SWEEPS & COMBAT AIR PATROL	SEPT. 2		
	US CARRIER MIDWAY ARRIVES	SEPT 4		
	Cease FIRE PERIOD ORDERED BY CNO	OCT 6	OCT 19	
	CNO DIRECTS TRANSFER OF US FORCES OUT	OCT 20		

Source:

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<p>Seventh Fleet <sup>*</sup> (carriers, cruisers, U.S. Air Force destroyers)</p> <p><sup>*</sup> carriers - Hancock, Shangri-La, Lexington, Midway, Essex, Bennington, Princeton (CVs) (2 arrive a little later)</p> <p>Hancock, Shangri-La, Lexington, Bennington, Princeton</p> <p>Essex U.S. air defense exercise 2 B-29 groups join Taiwan threat Midway</p> <p>Seventh Fleet</p> <p>Hancock Lexington <sup>400's</sup> Princeton Shangri-La</p> <p>CINCPAC forces 6 F-100's 2 US ships <u>Source:</u> PACAF units 6 F86-D airplanes</p>	<p>escorted Nationalist supply convoys - to within 3 miles of Quemoy (internatl. waters) protection &amp; supply</p> <p>CINCPACFLT informed 7th fleet that planned containment action</p> <p>ordered to leave Mediterranean (arrived 9/5 <del>arrived</del> 2)</p> <p>left Pearl Harbor arrived N of Taiwan readiness condition "Yankee"</p> <p>takes position S. of Taiwan take positions N. of Taiwan joins; then moves to S.E. moves to S.E.</p> <p>on alert deployed to Taiwan begin patrolling Taiwan Strait. CV group proceeds to Taiwan area on alert temporarily deployed to Taiwan - for Taiwan</p>	<p>23 Aug, 58 <del>28 Aug</del> (Halperin)</p> <p>24 Aug 58</p> <p>24 Aug 58 <del>5 Sept 58</del></p> <p>28 Aug 58 4 Sept 58</p> <p>25 Aug, 58 27 Aug, 58 28 Aug 58 by 30 Aug 58 24 Sept 58</p> <p>14 July, 78 3 Aug, 58 5 Aug, 58 6 Aug, 58 2 Aug 58</p>	<p>24 Oct 58</p> <p>Halperin, p 134</p> <p>Halperin, p. 65, 63</p>	<p>"Short of War" documentation bibliog, US Navy Special List #1</p>



US planes

patrolling 3 miles off Quanzhou, reporting  
PRC moves on mainland to Taiwan coast

5 SAC B-47s on Guam	on alert	17 Aug, 58	Halperin, p. 64
Midway	ordered to sail from Pearl to Taiwan	25 Aug 58	" p. 113
3 LSTs	dispatched to Taiwan	"	" p. 114
5th Air Force	on alert	26 Aug, 58	" p. 134
7th Fleet aircraft	daily surveys of straits beginning	"	" p. 135
16th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron (F-86s)	deployed from Japan to Taiwan	28 Aug 58	announced 30 Aug
escorts	at first limited to 1 DP - restriction lifted when PRC shelled 2nd convoy (8 Sept)		
Atomic capable artillery &	delivered to Quemoy in 1958 and open discussion of nuclear studies against PRC		Baldwin "Limited War" Atlantic Monthly 203 (May 1958) 35-43
Actual convoy escort		8/29/58 - 10/6/58	Halperin, p. 496
Hancock arrives	Taiwan (south of)	8/27	Halperin p. 134
Hancock & Lexington	exercises	8/28	" p. 135
more jet fighters (announced)	to Pacific	8/30	" "

Local SituationIncident: Quemoy-Matsu 58Target country: Comm Peoples' Republic of ChinaType of regime: communist partyNames and allegiances of prominent individuals:

Major reaction to incident: continued shelling islands but at lower level; Current History says renewed shelling 3 Nov, 58 Taiwan trying to involve US in clashes. w/ PRC; Taiwan pilots initiate clashes w/ PRC planes, Taiwan does not try hard to resupply islands w/o US escorts, etc; resupply by ship + airdrops

Soviet UnionOther Actors

Action

When

Others

Actor

Actions

When

PRC continuous shelling 8/23 - 10/6

Policy Context

Incident: FORMOSA

Diplomatic actions:

Official:	Form	Statements	To whom	Date
US Sec of State Puller		WARNS COMM CHINA THAT AN ATTEMPT TO SEIZE QUEMOY & MATSU WOULD CONSTITUTE A "THREAT TO THE PEACE" IN THAT AREA.	PRC	AUG 23
KATLIT CHINESE FOR. MIN. HUANG		SAWS HE DOES NOT SEE HOW US "COULD DO OTHERWISE" THAN DEFEND QUEMOY & MATSU	USA	AUG 19
US DEPT OF STATE	PRESS RELEASE	3RD WARNING IN 6 DAYS (CAUTION CHINESE (PRC) AGAINST OFFENSIVE - response to PRC broadcast saying PRC Army determined to liberate Taiwan. St says ties between Taiwan & islands closer, "highly hazardous" <u>PRC</u> )	PRC	AUG 28
PRES. EISENHOWER	PRESS CONF.	SAWS QUEMOY & MATSU MORE IMPORTANT TO FORMOSAN DEFENSE THAN 3 YEARS AGO	PRC	AUG 27

Other actions:

Type of action	Date
Army <sup>others</sup> expedite delivery of equipment to offshore islands troops + aircraft + patrol boat parts	27 Aug 58
Navy announces Essex moving from Mediterranean to 7th Fleet	28 Aug, 58
US plans to assume air defence of Taiwan formally takes over w/o public announcement - combined effort of West Clin;	24 Sept 58

[cont of st. Dept. release of 28 Aug]  
for PRC to assume attack on offshore islands would  
be a limited operation

See st. pols

~~See st. pols~~  
Formal statement  
+ background  
press conf

→ security of Taiwan increasingly related to  
security of Quemoy ~~and~~ "malade se. of force"  
as Q. would threaten security of US. Pres. would  
authorize US mil force employment if circumstances  
require  
→ wait to see how KMT fighting, but not until in  
extreme situation before offering mil. help;  
would include bombing of PRC concentrations on mainland

4 Sept 58



attack on Quemoy by making clear US would be involved, while not  
 Chiang to attack PRC & not alarming US public & allies, who opposed  
 by of defending off-shore islands

by whom:

Italerin, pp 121-22

to U.S. policymakers (include anticipated applicability to similar situations):  
 Outcome  
 & mobility of fleet demonstrated  
 stabilized

to target country:

to outside observers:

① US      ② PRC      ③ Taiwan      ④ USSR

② Taiwan      ③ USSR  
 ① PRC      ④ Taiwan